

**MINUTES OF THE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE SERVICES
INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, October 17, 2012 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 20 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. Stuart C. Reid, Senate Chair
Rep. Jim Bird, House Chair
Sen. Patricia W. Jones
Sen. Karen W. Morgan
Sen. Aaron Osmond
Sen. Jerry W. Stevenson
Rep. Johnny Anderson
Rep. Rebecca Chavez-Houck
Rep. Brian Doughty
Rep. Keith Grover
Rep. Ronda Rudd Menlove

Rep. Jeremy A. Peterson
Rep. Dixon M. Pitcher
Rep. Marie H. Poulson
Rep. Dean T. Sanpei
Rep. Brad R. Wilson

Staff Present:

Mr. Benjamin N. Christensen, Policy Analyst
Mr. Peter Asplund, Associate General Counsel
Mr. Robert H. Rees, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Debra Hale, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Bird called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

MOTION: Sen. Reid moved to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2012, meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Morgan, Rep. Anderson, Rep. Chavez-Houck, Rep. Grover, Rep. Menlove, and Rep. Poulson were absent for the vote.

2. Intergenerational Poverty Mitigation Report

Mr. Jon Pierpont, Acting Director, Department of Workforce Services (DWS), presented a statutorily required report on intergenerational poverty and stated that almost 36,000 adults currently receiving public assistance had also received it for at least 12 months as children.

Mr. Rick Little, Director, Research and Analysis, Department of Workforce Services, reviewed a visual presentation “Intergenerational Poverty Report 2012” and distributed a booklet “Intergenerational Poverty in Utah 2012.” He described the statute requiring the report and the findings of the tracking system that the department has instituted to collect data on intergenerational poverty. Mr. Little said that the data indicated that the more impoverished a person is during childhood, the more likely that person is to receive public assistance as an adult. He added that most intergenerational adults in poverty are unmarried females with at least two children, and one third of them have less than a high school education. Mr. Little concluded that services need to be tailored to improve outcomes for children in the following areas: 1) education, 2) employment experience, and 3) pregnancy prevention.

3. Unemployment Insurance Fund Amendments (draft legislation)

Mr. Bill Starks, Director, Unemployment Insurance Division, Department of Workforce Services, distributed “Workforce Services Amendments Legislative Brief” and discussed the purpose of the request for amendments to the Employment Security Act regarding unemployment fraud. He explained that draft

legislation “Workforce Services Amendments” (2013FL-0242/005) requires the Unemployment Insurance Division to determine that a claimant has willfully made a false statement or representation to obtain unemployment insurance benefits, the penalty weeks begin on the Sunday before the day on which the determination is issued. He added that, beginning October 1, 2013, the draft legislation also requires the division to deposit 15% of a civil penalty collected for fraud in obtaining benefits into the Unemployment Compensation Fund in compliance with the federal Social Security Act.

MOTION: Rep. Chavez-Houck moved that draft legislation “Workforce Services Amendments” be adopted as a committee-recommended bill. The motion passed unanimously.
Sen. Reid was absent for the vote.

4. Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund (OWHLF) Report

Mr. Gordon D. Walker, Director, Housing and Community Development Division, Department of Workforce Services, referred to the “Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund Summary Report,” which was included in the mailing packet, and explained that the purpose of the fund is to partner with public and private organizations to create and preserve affordable housing for Utah’s low-income community. Mr. Walker added that the fund's goal is to eliminate chronic homelessness in the state within 10 years. He reviewed many of the steps the fund has taken to achieve that goal.

5. Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism (draft legislation)

Ms. Julie Fisher, Executive Director, Department of Heritage and Arts (DHA), and Ms. LaDawn Stoddard, AmeriCorps Program Manager, Utah Commission on Volunteerism, reviewed the purpose of draft legislation “Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism” (2013FL-0253/008) and summarized the duties of the commission. Ms. Fisher explained that the draft legislation changes the name of the Utah Commission on Volunteers to the Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism, modifies the membership and size of the commission, and describes commission duties.

MOTION: Rep. Menlove moved that draft legislation “Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism” be adopted as a committee-recommended bill. The motion passed unanimously.
Sen. Stevenson and Rep. Pitcher were absent for the vote.

6. Agency Reporting Provisions (draft legislation)

Mr. Christensen described S.B. 274, “Legislative Committee Amendments,” which passed during the 2012 General Session. The bill provided uniform language regarding the reporting requirements for the DHA, the DWS, and the Governor's Office of Economic Development. Mr. Christensen stated that, during the September meeting, the committee voted to prioritize a bill file to further the standardization of reporting provisions.

Mr. Christensen explained that draft legislation “Agency Reporting Provisions” (2013FL-0302/003) provides uniform language for the DHA, the DWS, and the Governor’s Office of Economic Development to submit required annual written reports to the Legislature or to legislative committees before November 1.

MOTION: Rep. Menlove moved that draft legislation “Agency Reporting Provisions” be passed as a committee bill. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Stevenson and Rep. Pitcher were absent for the vote.

7. DWS Assistance Programs -- Summary

Mr. Asplund reviewed a visual presentation of a summary table entitled “Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Assistance Programs,” a copy of which was included in the mailing packet. He explained that the table was designed to briefly describe 18 public assistance programs, including the purpose, eligibility requirements, benefit amount and restrictions, administrative contact information, and law citations for each program. The table is meant to be a resource to legislators and others in understanding available assistance programs.

Mr. Geoffrey Landward, Director, Division of Legal Services, Department of Workforce Services, thanked the committee staff for their excellent work on the summary chart and said it will be useful as an informational tool regarding the department’s duties. He entertained questions from committee members.

8. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Implementation by the DWS -- Update

Mr. Kevin Burt, Associate Director, Eligibility Services Division, Department of Workforce Services, distributed “Two Major Decisions That Impact DWS” and described how the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will significantly impact Medicaid eligibility, which the department administers on behalf of the federal government. He updated the committee on how the act will affect the department, what flexibility is allowed, and how the department is preparing for the changes.

9. Other Committee Business / Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Reid moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Stevenson and Rep. Grover were absent for the vote.

Chair Bird adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.